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ABSTRACT

The Retention Issues Subcommittee of the Task Force on Enhancing Access for African American Males of the University System of Georgia (USG) was charged with the identification of barriers to the successful retention of African American males within the USG and finding successful programs aimed at addressing these problems. A number of barriers were identified, some of which were related to socioeconomic status. Others were related to student expectations, and many were related to college preparation for African American males. Some barriers to retention were related to faculty involvement and lack of institutional commitment. To address these barriers, the Subcommittee made 11 recommendations. These begin with better data collection and analysis and include specific advice for the USG, including the establishment of a System-level office for student retention. An appendix describes programs targeting African American males at some USG institutions. (SLD)

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ED 477 777

The University System of Georgia's
Task Force on Enhancing Access for African-American Males

REPORT

of the Retention Issues Subcommittee

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UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA
TASK FORCE ON
ENHANCING ACCESS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHARGE

Identify existing barriers to the successful retention of African-American males within the University System of Georgia and successful programs aimed at addressing these problems. Prepare a written report of the Subcommittee's findings and recommendations for incorporation into the Task Force Report.

BARRIERS

- Lack of availability of financial aid
- Inadequate SAT preparation and success
- Lack of appropriateness of apprenticeship programs
- Lack of availability and insufficient information about college
- Lack of parental involvement
- College is not a goal
- Lack of connection with students who go to college
- Inability to adjust to culture and atmosphere in community, in high school and in college
- Alienation from the academic environment
- Insecurity
- Lack of participation in student organizations in high school and in college
- Size of identifiable campus cohort
- Many first-generation college students
- Low expectations on part of students, faculty, staff and parents
- Lack of available and inadequate orientation, mentoring and tutoring programs
- Inadequate and inappropriate academic advising
- Inadequate career counseling
- Poor or "last minute" use of tutoring services
- Lack of understanding of importance of using campus computer information systems and channels
- Lack of relevance, focus and programmatic connectedness of institutional retention efforts
- Inadequate academic base of retention efforts
- Inadequate role of faculty in retention efforts
- Little or no reward for faculty and staff efforts in student retention
- Lack of institutional commitment to address African-American males
- Lack of institutional priority on retention of African-American males

- Inadequate recognition of academic performance
- Lack of an adequate structure for peer support
- Lack of research on institutions' retention/attrition experience

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Therefore, the Retention Issues Subcommittee makes the following recommendations.

1. Retention data should be collected and analyzed for all retention programs identified as a "Best Practice" to verify success and whether a program might be replicated for African-American males.

2. Best Practices: Georgia's Best Higher Education Retention Programs should be updated and substantiated with data. Results should be reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the program should be appropriately marketed and staffed.

3. Retention efforts should begin before the high school junior year and require faculty involvement.

4. Ways should be developed to initiate and or expand faculty involvement in African-American male student retention.

5. High priority, accountability and resources for African-American male student retention should be established by the University System of Georgia for each institution.

6. Institutional retention efforts targeting African-American males should be focused, relevant and sustained through graduation.

7. Empirical evidence of the barriers identified in this report should be researched by each institution within the University System of Georgia.

8. Institutions should provide within their recognition system rewards for faculty and staff who are involved in student retention.

9. A System-level office for student retention should be established.

10. The work of the Minority Advising Program (MAP) should be substantiated by data, critiqued against established system-wide standards and feedback from the System-level should be given to each institution.

11. The Minority Advising Program (MAP) should be a part of the recommended System-level office for student retention.

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA
TASK FORCE
ON
ENHANCING ACCESS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

Retention Issues Subcommittee
Report

CHARGE

Identify existing barriers to the successful retention of African-American males within the University System of Georgia and successful programs aimed at addressing these problems. Prepare a written report of the Subcommittee's findings and recommendations for incorporation into the Task Force Report.

BACKGROUND

In considering the existing barriers to the successful retention of African-American males within the University System of Georgia, the Retention Subcommittee first sought to answer three questions: What are the existing barriers? What is currently being done to successfully address theses barriers? What needs to be done to eliminate these barriers and ensure student retention?

The Subcommittee explored many factors that contribute to creating barriers to retention. The factors included the characteristics of success and failure in college, demographic data on African-American males, pathways for access to college, institutional levels and degrees of accountability, institutional priority for the retention of African-American males, the lack of substantive analysis of data on African-American male college access and retention, the impact of socio-cultural forces within a college, the adequacy of holistic support for African-American males once enrolled, the availability of data on successful academic support and retention programs generally and for African-American males in particular, the adequacy of African-American male preparation for college, and finally, African-American male access to and availability of advice on financial resources and counseling to get into and stay in college. Various ways to mitigate these factors were also explored. The results are presented in the Subcommittee's findings.

The Subcommittee quickly dispensed with well-known factors that appear to influence African-American males' persistence to graduation from colleges, especially those over which students have little control, e.g., finances, parents' college graduation rate and quality of schooling. It focused instead on identifying the successes and the different pathways to commencement that students have found useful.

The Subcommittee also reviewed a report on the best practices of the University System's retention programs to determine what was being done on the respective campuses. It wanted to know what kinds of activities were being used to address retention. The Subcommittee sought information about whether or not retention efforts were coordinated or left to individual institutions. What are the measures of successful retention programs? Are they validated by data or merely descriptive of activities? Can successful retention programs be targeted to African-American males without legal entanglements?

The results of the process of inquiry and review are presented in the Subcommittee's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

FINDINGS

The barriers to the successful retention of African-American males within the University System of Georgia are multi-various in nature, origin and scope. Those that have been identified include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of availability financial aid
- Inadequate SAT preparation and success
- Lack of appropriateness of apprenticeship programs
- Lack of availability and insufficient information about college
- Lack of parental involvement
- College is not a goal
- Lack of connection with students who go to college
- Inability to adjust to culture and atmosphere in community, in high school and in college
- Alienation from the academic environment
- Insecurity
- Lack of participation in student organizations in high school and in college
- Size of identifiable campus cohort
- Many first-generation college students
- Low expectations on part of students, faculty, staff, and parents
- Lack of available and inadequate orientation, mentoring and tutoring programs
- Inadequate and inappropriate academic advising
- Inadequate career counseling
- Poor or "last minute" use of tutoring services
- Lack of understanding of importance of using campus computer information systems and channels
- Lack of relevance, focus and programmatic connectedness of institutional retention efforts
- Inadequate academic base of retention efforts
- Inadequate role of faculty in retention efforts
- Little or no reward for faculty and staff efforts in student retention
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- Lack of institutional priority on retention of African-American males
- Inadequate recognition of academic performance
- Lack of an adequate structure for peer support
- Lack of research on institutions' retention/attrition experience

Moreover, regional differences exist with respect to retention issues. This is especially true where the African-American male presence is not significantly large enough to create a viable cohort in the student body.

While many of the barriers are outside the scope of University System of Georgia's influence, some are not. Among the barriers that can be affected by the

University System of Georgia are financial aid, information about college, parental involvement, campus culture and atmosphere, adequacy of orientation, mentoring and tutoring programs, student preparation, academic advising, institution's retention efforts, academic base for retention and faculty involvement in the retention and institutional commitment to the target population. To systematically address these barriers requires an institution to commit and give high priority to the recruitment and retention of African-American males, including improved research on internal retention/attrition patterns. Institutional leadership should outline and articulate the institution's priority and accountability. Faculty and staff should engage by mentoring, advising, counseling and administering programs that address African-American male retention.

Finally, to address the retention of African-American males, each institution in the University System of Georgia should assess the prevalence of the barriers listed above and those others that may be unique to the particular institution. During this process, data should be collected and analyzed. This assessment and use of data can provide the basis for retention efforts appropriate to the particular dynamics of the institution.

BEST PRACTICES

Perhaps the best way to begin to address the issue of barriers to retention of African-American males in the University System of Georgia is to update the inventory of *BEST PRACTICES: Georgia's best higher education retention programs.* This report identifies the very best retention program practices and successes in the University System. Because this report was completed in February of 1997, it is important to know what has been the success of these programs since then, including the work of the Minority Advising Program (MAP). Particularly important is developing an understanding based on empirical research of whether these programs, having been recognized for the successful efforts in student retention, have had sustained success over the last five years. Can these programs be replicated to focus on a target population and enjoy the same level of success? Do these programs offer holistic approaches to student retention that may be applied specifically and beneficially to African-American males?

The selected programs that seem to focus on the goals and objectives of the Task Force have been listed here with a very brief description of each as taken from the *BEST PRACTICES: Georgia's best higher education retention programs (1997).* Further review of the current status and data collection and analysis of the success of each program is required before any conclusions should be drawn as to applicability to the concerns of the Task Force.

- *The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's Pathways to Teaching Program* – Armstrong Atlantic State University and Savannah State University:

  Since its beginning in 1992, the Pathways to Teaching Program has attempted to improve the retention rates of qualified minority students, particularly males drawn to the field of K-12 education programs and thereby increases the number of teachers, primarily minority teachers, in the Savannah-Chatham County area.

- *Freshman Experience* - Georgia Institute of Technology Office of Minority Educational Development (OMED):

Challenge is a bridge program for freshmen. It is a highly regarded, five-week intensive summer orientation program. Courses in the pre-college program enhance problem solving abilities of incoming minority freshmen, as well as provide additional work on word problems and applying formal concepts to real world problems.

OMED runs a year-long peer mentoring program for freshmen students called the Freshmen Team Coach program. The program is aimed at maintaining continuous contact with freshmen throughout their entire first year. (See APPENDIX data on performance of program participants).

- *The Residential Freshman Experience (RFE)* - Georgia College and State University

  The Residential Freshman Experience is a unique residential program that supports the developmental needs of students in their transition to college while emphasizing the liberal arts curriculum. First-year students who volunteer for RFE live together in the same residence hall to permit emphasis on integrating the academic program with the students' personal and social needs.

- *Summer Minority Enrichment Program* – Georgia College and State University

  The Minority Enrichment Program is designed to recruit and retain African-American students on the Georgia College campus. Using the context of the physical and or biological sciences, it provides student development and enrichment activities and skill improvement in English, reading and mathematics.

- *SUCCESS IN U* – Georgia Southern University

  SUCCESS IN U is a freshman residential experience designed in 1990 by academic and student affairs faculty and staff. The purpose of this structured program is to provide first year students at Georgia Southern University with services, activities, programs and resources that will enhance their first-year experience. It addresses the first-year students' need for building healthy academic skills through a variety of services such as tutoring, study skills programs and workshops, computers, and reserved classes. First year students' need for peer interaction is address by housing students together in four residence halls on campus.

There is one other program that should be included here that was not listed in *BEST PRACTICES* because it was designed and implemented after its publication: Albany State University's *HOLLEY INSTITUTE*. The *INSTITUTE* was piloted in 1999 as a pre-college project designed to help students with personal and academic potential to meet the standards necessary to enter Albany State University. The overarching goal of the *HOLLEY INSTITUTE* is to help students who have all the requisite admissions requirements except an adequate SAT score (See APPENDIX). Participants retake the SAT upon completion of the summer program.

It should also be noted that these programs, while exhibiting similarity in focus, hone in on specific aspects of the retention issue unique to each institution. Thus, programs aimed at successfully addressing the barriers that have been identified must recognize that "one size does not fit all." That is, what works at Albany State may not be a viable approach to African-American male retention at North Georgia College. Therefore, a retention model that incorporates multiple approaches appropriate to an institution's unique demographic characteristics and resources should be considered to address the various barriers to retention.

In developing models for African-American male retention, the components must include partnerships involving high schools, technical, two-year and four-year institutions. Another component requires recruiting African-American males in places where they are and who are unsure whether or not college is among their future goals. The essential elements of this process include providing such African-American males with information about college, incentives for going, getting them prepared to go and ensuring there is an adequate support system in place throughout matriculation.

Recruiting and retaining African-American males requires a better understanding of the communities from which the students come. It also requires a different kind of engagement than has heretofore been used. It begins with parental involvement not only during recruitment and admissions, but also for retention. Whenever possible and practical, retention programs should incorporate a mechanism for parental involvement. For example, parents' weekend activities that engage students, faculty, staff, administrators and parents can be a powerful tool to help retain students.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there is activity related to student retention across the University System of Georgia about which descriptive materials are available, there is little or no analysis of the success of these efforts. No data are available. No analysis of how or why these programs are or are not successful is available. Thus, there appears to be no definite way of determining the success of USG's retention efforts or whether successful programs can be replicated to target African-American males. If such data exist, they need to be presented and studied. Where data are not available, research on program effectiveness needs to be conducted and reported.

To retain African-American males, individual and institutional commitment to do so must become a major and high priority. With such priority, adequate and appropriate resources are required and must be sustained. Otherwise, there is no commitment. With such priority, appropriate accountability measures must be put in place and maintained. Such accountability measures link people, program productivity and the evaluation of year-to-year retention results.

The degree to which faculty and staff involve themselves in retention efforts is a function of the rewards system within each institution. When retention is not valued, it has low or no priority. Thus, faculty and staff involvement in retention efforts means they get neither recognition nor reward for their work. Consequently, there is no meaningful faculty or staff commitment to retention.

The processes associated with a student enrolling in college must be appropriately integrated and coordinated to reasonably ensure the success of institutional retention efforts. Thus, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, advising, counseling, teaching,

mentoring, tutoring and coaching are all interrelated phases of one process and program of student retention, of which the ultimate measure of success is graduation.

The Minority Advising Program (MAP) is one example of a System-wide program designed to address minority student recruitment and retention that has potential for improving the retention of African-American males in particular. The work and accountability of MAP needs to be elevated to a higher level of visibility and effectiveness within and across the University System. Important to this increased elevation is the need for a critique and feedback on the work of the each institutional Minority Advising Program.

Once priority and resources are established and efforts are coordinated, then, attention must be given to identifying African-American males who are not participating in institutional programs that provide assistance for staying in college and graduating.

Therefore, The Retention Committee of The University System of Georgia's Task Force on Enhancing Access for African-American Males makes the following recommendations:

1. Retention data should be collected and analyzed for all retention programs identified as a "Best Practice" to verify success and whether a program might be replicated for African-American males.

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APPENDIX

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING & OUTREACH

ASU PREP PROGRAM DATA 2001-2002

Ethnicity			Gender		Grades					
Black	White	Other	M	F	7	8	9	10	11	Totals
365	3	4	129	243	151	140	143	24	14	**372**

SUMMER RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Middle School	103
High School	94
Totals	**197**

RESEARCH LEARNING TOUR – PREP 3 YEAR STUDENTS

Male	8
Female	19
Totals	**27**

2002-2003 IMPLEMENTATION OF PREP PROGRAMS

MIDDLE SCHOOL TUTORING & MENTORING AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Baker County Elementary School - 38
Dougherty Middle School - 40
Radium Springs Middle School - 45
Southside Middle School - 32
Mitchell County Middle School - 35
Quitman County Elementary & Middle School – 42
Terrell Middle School - 37
Worth County Middle School - 28

A total of 297 middle school students participate in the Mentoring/Tutoring Program. The major focus of middle school tutoring and mentoring is the acquisition of communication skills (speaking, writing, and reading) for Language Arts. The focus for Math is Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1 skills. These tutoring sessions are held two evenings per week for 1 hour

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE BOUND ACADEMY

Dougherty Comprehensive High School - 31
Monroe Comprehensive High School - 27
Westover Comprehensive High School - 23
Albany High School - 14
Mitchell-Baker High School -26
Terrell High School - 41
Worth County High School - 32

A total of 194 participate in the College Bound Academy. Test preparation and strategies are provided for the high school students in SAT, ACT, and GHSGT. The local high school students attend ASU for the test preparation instructions, and these sessions are held in Holley Hall on Saturdays from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. The other systems have sessions on two evenings after school for one hour per day.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

ASU Expects Success is a Faith Based initiative which provides test preparation instructions for the SAT, ACT, and GHSGT. Middle school students will receive instructions in communication skills and Algebra 1 concepts. These individual programs are located in at the following sites:

Institutional First Baptist Church - Albany
St. Peter AME Church – Camilla
Open Door Church of Praise – Mitchell County
Greater Cutliff Grove Baptist Church
Bronwood Church of Christ – Dawson

HOLLEY INSTITUTE

TREND DATA 1997-2000

This data reflects the number of students admitted to ASU

1997 – 23
1998 – 25
1999 – 23
2000 - 24

ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

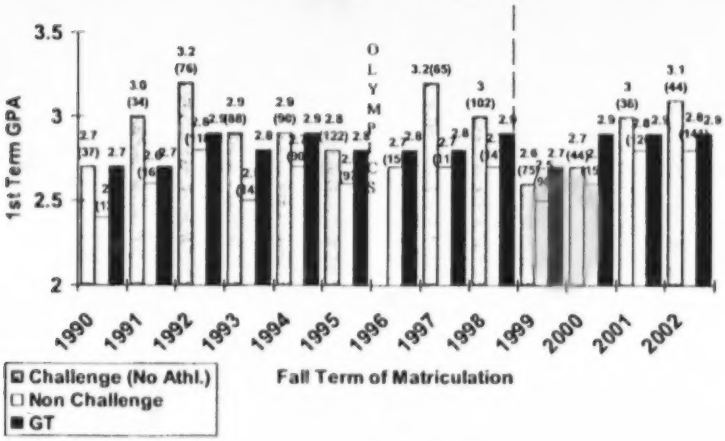
Holley Institute Admission Data

ASU	Darton	ATC	Total
7	6	15	28
25%	21%	56%	100%

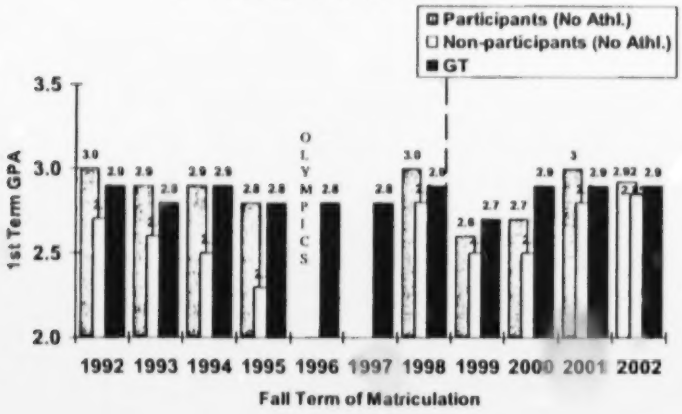
2002 SUMMER – HOLLEY INSTITUTE

ASU Enrolled	2
Atlanta Metro College	1
Total	3

Georgia Institute of Technology
Minority 1st Term Performance
Challenge Program



Georgia Institute of Technology
Freshmen Team Coach Program
1st Term Performance



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